Page 17, delete the second paragraph (lines 7-10) and insert:

The use of the FNL medium in combination with the prior bleaching of the tissues according to the invention makes it possible to substantially decrease the time required for selecting the green calluses and the work load for the entire process of transforming the plants (Figure 2).

In the Abstract:

Delete the Abstract and insert the Abstract submitted herewith.

In the claims:

1. (amended) Method for transforming plant cells by introducing a heterologous gene into said plant cells with a gene for tolerance to HPPD inhibitors as a selection marker, said method comprising the steps of:

a) preparing and culturing competent plant cells capable of receiving the heterologous gene and selection marker in a suitable medium,

b) transforming the competent cells with the heterologous gene and the selection marker,

c) growing and selecting the transformed cells comprising the heterologous gene and the selection marker in a suitable medium,

characterized in that a step for bleaching the competent plant cells is carried out before the transformation step (b), by introducing a suitable amount of HPPD inhibitor into the suitable culture medium of the competent plant cells.

2. (amended) Method for preparing transgenic plants comprising a heterologous gene integrated into their genome, comprising a method for transforming plant cells according to Claim 1, and further comprising the following steps of :

d) regenerating plants from the transformed cells selected in one or more suitable media and, where appropriate,

e) producing and recovering seeds of the fertile transformed plants, said seeds comprising the heterologous gene and the selection marker.

4. (amended) Method according to Claim 1, characterized in that the plant cells are chosen from the cells of dicotyledonous plants.

6. (amended) Method according to Claim 1, characterized in that the competent plant cells are chosen from embryogenic calluses, cell cultures or a solid support or in suspension, or embryonic tissues.

10. (amended) Method according to Claim 1, characterized in that the HPPD inhibitor is chosen from isoxazoles, diketonitriles, triketones, and pyrazolinates.

11. (amended) Method according to Claim 10, characterized in that the concentration of HPPD inhibitors is between 0.5 mg/ml and 50 mg/ml.

12. (amended) Method for preparing transgenic plants comprising a heterologous gene integrated into their genome, which method comprises a method for transforming plant cells by introducing a heterologous gene into said plant cells with a gene for tolerance to HPPD inhibitors as a selection marker, said method comprising the steps of:

a) preparing and culturing competent plant cells capable of receiving the heterologous gene and the selection marker in a suitable medium,

b) transforming the competent cells with the heterologous gene and the selection marker,

c) growing and selecting the transformed cells comprising the heterologous gene and the selection marker in suitable medium,

d) regenerating plants from the transformed cells selected in one or more suitable media and, where appropriate,

e) producing and recovering seeds of the fertile transformed plants, said seeds comprising the heterologous gene and the selection marker, then producing novel

varieties of transgenic plants which have stably integrated the heterologous gene into their genome, in conventional selection programmes,

characterized in that a step for bleaching the competent cells is carried out before the transformation step (b), by introducing a suitable amount of HPPD inhibitor into the suitable culture medium of the competent plant cells.

13. Method according to claim 2, characterized in that the selection marker gene is eliminated by crossing the transformed plants comprising the heterologous gene and the selection marker gene with a nontransformed variety of the same plant.

Add the following new claims:

14. (new) Method according to claim 4, characterized in that the plant cells are chosen from the cells of tobacco, rapeseed, sugar beet, potatoes, cotton and soya bean.

15. (new) Method according to claim10, characterized in that the HPPD inhibitor is isoxaflutole.

16. (new) Method according to claim 10, characterized in that the HPPD inhibitor is 2-cyano-3-cyclopropyl-1-1(2-CH3SO2-4-CF3 phenyl)propan-1,3-dione or 2-cyano-3-cyclopropyl1-1-(2-CH3SO2-4-2-C12 phenyl)propan-1,3-dione.

17. (new) Method according to claim 10, characterized in that the HPPD inhibitor is sulcotrione or mesotrione.

18. (new) Method according to claim 11, characterized in that the concentration of inhibitors is between 1 mg/ml and 10 mg/ml.